Callous defacing of a protected monument

446. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether callous defacing of a protected monument has been reported in the Hindustan Times dated 22nd June, 2001; and

(b) if so, the action taken by the Archaeological Survey of India to maintain it properly and save it from negligence?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) The Government are aware of the media report in this regard.

(b) The Raja Ugrasen-ki-Baoli, the protected monument mentioned in the media report is in a good state of preservation and specific conservation measures are taken for its repair and maintenance as required.

Improvement of Toursim in Pondicherry

447. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to improve tourism in Pondicherry; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the plans?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Development and promotion of tourism and cultural activities is the responsibility of the State Governments/ UT Administrations. However, the Department of Tourism, Government of India provides Central financial assistance on the basis of projects prioritised annually in consultation with them. Funds are released on the basis of inter-se-priority and subject to availability.

During 2000-2001, three projects were sanctioned for Rs. 26.18 lakhs. For the year 2001-2002, 8 projects worth Rs. 279.00 lakhs have been prioritised.